

Lessons from the frontline: the impact of redeployment during COVID-19 on nurse wellbeing, performance and retention

Submission date 28/09/2020	Recruitment status No longer recruiting	☒ Prospectively registered ☒ Protocol
Registration date 30/10/2020	Overall study status Completed	☐ Statistical analysis plan ☒ Results
Last Edited 14/10/2024	Condition category Other	☐ Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

During the COVID-19 pandemic, NHS staff moved to different roles and units (redeployed) in large numbers to meet changing demands of the service. At times, this has meant that staff were working in unfamiliar environments doing unfamiliar tasks. With regard to nurses (the largest proportion of the workforce), some have been asked to work in more risky settings, while others have been pulled off patient-facing duties because they are in an 'at-risk' group. Rapid guidance was published by NHS England/Improvement on how to manage the redeployment of staff who were likely to be working outside their 'comfort zone' and how to do this while ensuring safe practice. This advice included having appropriate supervision and considering health and wellbeing. However, when planning how best to redeploy and support staff during this crisis (at national, organisational and ward level) there has been very little research evidence for senior staff to draw on. Moreover, there is no existing research on the long-term impact of different kinds of redeployment on staff outcomes: wellbeing, performance and retention. This is vital because nursing shortages are already a serious problem in the UK and so we need to know how best to support staff so that they are able to provide safe, effective and compassionate care. This programme of research addresses these gaps in knowledge. Two different work packages are planned which, together, will provide a much better understanding of how to plan for and manage redeployment of nurses and how to support them during, and in the aftermath of, a period of redeployment. This knowledge will be useful for routine service delivery, where creating a more flexible NHS workforce is now a national priority and so redeployment may become more common, as well as for planning more specifically in a pandemic or other crisis situation.

In work package 1 the aim is to examine how decisions were made in the redeployment of nursing staff, based on an ethical framework and the barriers and enablers to doing this. In work package 2 the aim is to understand how nurses made sense of redeployment and how this affected their longer-term job performance and well-being. The researchers will work with key stakeholders (e.g. Royal College of Nursing, NHS England/NHS Improvement, NHS Employers) to share learning to inform future planning of redeployment strategies for nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.

Who can participate?

Work package 1: senior staff such as senior nurses and HR managers who were responsible for decision making about how, where and when staff were redeployed

Work package 2: nurses involved in different forms of redeployment

What does the study involve?

The study will involve working with three NHS Trusts to identify staff to take part in interviews, focus groups and surveys across both work packages. In the first work package the researchers will interview up to 11 senior staff and run one focus group involving five senior nurses in each of the three sites. In the second work package the researchers will conduct interviews and short surveys at three timepoints with up to 15 nurses from each site.

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

There are no known risks or benefits to participants but during data gathering some nurses may become upset when recollecting negative experiences of redeployment. Some may also benefit from taking part through having the opportunity to tell their story confidentially and reflect on the positive experience, for example, where new relationships have formed and new skills and knowledge gained.

Where is the study run from?

Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (UK)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

October 2020 to September 2022

Who is funding the study?

National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) (UK)

Who is the main contact?

Prof. Rebecca Lawton

r.j.lawton@leeds.ac.uk

Contact information

Type(s)

Scientific

Contact name

Prof Rebecca Lawton

Contact details

University of Leeds

Leeds

United Kingdom

LS2 9JT

+44 (0)113 3435715

r.j.lawton@leeds.ac.uk

Type(s)

Scientific

Contact name

Dr Jenni Murray

ORCID ID

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0563-0020>

Contact details

Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Bradford
United Kingdom
BD9 6RJ
+44 (0)1274 383667
jenni.murray@bthft.nhs.uk

Additional identifiers

National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR)

132041

Study information**Scientific Title**

Lessons from the frontline: the impact of redeployment during COVID-19 on nurse wellbeing, performance and retention - a multicentre observational study

Acronym

Redeploy

Study objectives

Delivering safe and effective healthcare requires sufficient staff numbers with the right mix of skills. Thus the rapid redeployment of nursing staff has been critical to the NHS response to COVID-19. The NIHR have recognised the significance of these changes and the challenges of rapidly reallocating staff without evidence on how best to do this or what the longer term consequences are. This study directly addresses this evidence gap.

Ethics approval required

Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)

Approved 03/12/2020, Business, Environment and Social Sciences Faculty Research Ethics Committee at the University of Leeds (Leeds University Business School, Maurice Keyworth Building, Leeds, LS2 9JT, UK; +44 (0)113 343 6831; researchethics@leeds.ac.uk), ref: AREA20-041

Primary study design

Observational

Study design

Multicentre observational study involving three NHS Trust sites using both qualitative cross-sectional (first work package) and longitudinal (second work package) interviewing and survey methods

Study type(s)

Other

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

Nurse wellbeing, performance and retention

Interventions

This observational study will involve two work packages. The first will employ cross-sectional semi-structured interviews and focus groups with staff between November 2020 and July 2021. The second work package will use a longitudinal approach conducting semi-structured interviews and surveys with staff affected by redeployment over three timepoints between December 2020 and January 2022.

Intervention Type

Other

Primary outcome(s)

Management of redeployment (as a main qualitative theme) assessed using interviews and focus groups between November 2020 and July 2021

Key secondary outcome(s)

1. Nurse wellbeing assessed using interviews and surveys between December 2020 and January 2022
2. Job outcomes for nurses assessed using interviews and surveys between December 2020 and January 2022

Completion date

30/09/2022

Eligibility**Key inclusion criteria**

Work package 1:

Senior nurses (e.g. matrons, Heads of Nursing, Directors of Nursing) and senior HR Managers with experience of managing redeployment during COVID-19.

Work package 2:

Nurses who were redeployed to high-risk environments (e.g. ICU, respiratory wards; nurses already working in high-risk environments who acquired redeployed staff and; nurse redeployed to lower risk environments (i.e. non-patient-facing for health reasons).

Participant type(s)

Health professional

Healthy volunteers allowed

No

Age group

Adult

Sex

All

Total final enrolment

101

Key exclusion criteria

Does not meet inclusion criteria

Date of first enrolment

23/11/2020

Date of final enrolment

05/01/2022

Locations**Countries of recruitment**

United Kingdom

England

Study participating centre

-

United Kingdom

-

Sponsor information**Organisation**

Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

ROR

<https://ror.org/05gekvn04>

Funder(s)**Funder type**

Government

Funder Name

National Institute for Health Research

Alternative Name(s)

National Institute for Health Research, NIHR Research, NIHRresearch, NIHR - National Institute for Health Research, NIHR (The National Institute for Health and Care Research), NIHR

Funding Body Type

Government organisation

Funding Body Subtype

National government

Location

United Kingdom

Results and Publications

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

The data-sharing plans for the current study are unknown and will be made available at a later date.

IPD sharing plan summary

Data sharing statement to be made available at a later date

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Results article		27/05/2024	13/06/2024	Yes	No
Results article		21/09/2024	14/10/2024	Yes	No
Protocol file	version 4	12/08/2021	06/01/2022	No	No
Study website	Study website	11/11/2025	11/11/2025	No	Yes